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Ukraine forces resume massive shelling in Slavyansk region

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Ukraine's National Guard has resumed massive shelling of a settlement near the eastern Ukrainian city of Slavyansk on Saturday. "Bombing alarm sirens are switched on in the city," a self-defense representative told Itar-Tass. Meanwhile, automatic rifle fire can be heard in Semyonovka and the Krasny Liman settlement on a highway to the eastern city of Kharkov, the representative added.

The shelling of Semyonovka from Mount Karachun resumed again on Friday evening. "An intensive fire from mortars and howitzers" lasted several hours, the people's self-defense representative said. However, reports of casualties and destroyed buildings in this settlement are not yet available, because no one was permitted to enter the area under continuing gunfire.

Kiev to try to complete special operation in eastern Ukraine before Poroshenko's inauguration - DPR

The city center also came under gunfire overnight to Saturday. A fodder-producing plant has been shelled, Stella Khorosheva, said spokesperson for Slavyansk People's Mayor Vyacheslav Ponomarev.

For his part, the self-defense activist noted that two residential houses had been partially destroyed in Revolution and Lenin Streets near the Ukrainian Security Service's local department building. "Several people were wounded by pieces of broken glass," he added.

However, self-defense in the city of Kramatorsk, ten kilometers from the city of Slavyansk in east Ukraine's Donetsk Region, denied several media reports that battles were underway in the city. "Sporadic gunshots were heard but, in general, all is calm in the city," the self-defense activist said.

Reports of intensive clashes around Donetsk international airport remain unconfirmed. "As far as we know there are no active combat actions in this district now," the self-defense activist said.

Intense clashes break out on Slavyansk outskirts, casualties reported

Intensive fighting broke out in several areas on the outskirts of Slavyansk where Ukrainian military is using attack helicopters, the city self-defense headquarters' representative told RIA Novosti. He added that at least two civilians had been killed. "About 7-10 helicopters are circling over the battleground. From time to time they fire decoy flares and strafe militant positions with machine-gun fire," the headquarters representative said.

Shooting resumed at the intersection of the Kharkov-Rostov route and the road to Red Liman where the militants periodically attacked Ukrainian military checkpoint in the afternoon. Gunfire was also reported at the military airbase near Kramatorsk. Clashes take place near Chervony Molochar village and Andreevsky checkpoint.

Earlier this afternoon the Ukrainian military resumed shelling a residential district with mortars. Self-defense headquarters report that two civilians, among them a 40-year old woman, were killed as a result.